



# THE PRAYER CLOSET

Equipping & Encouraging Believers  
In Prayer

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## SPIRITUAL MOUTHWASH!!

Do you need a spiritual mouthwash? When I was growing up, I heard this warning numerous times, "Young man, I'm going to wash your mouth out with soap." I heard this when I spoke inappropriate or harsh words. My mother never actually washed my mouth out with soap (although she probably wanted to). Yet, she wanted me to know what I had said was sinful and that I needed to clean my speech up. It was a direct and vivid reminder that I needed to guard the words that I spoke.

Does your speech need cleaning up? Do you need a vivid reminder to guard your words? Lately God has been burdening me about sins of speech. He has been convicting me of the necessity of cleaning up our speech for our prayer lives. You may be thinking, "How are cleaning up our speech and prayer connected?" The tongue that you use to speak to God speaks to others. The lips that you use to praise God are used to communicate with others. The speech that you use to fellowship with God is also used to relate to others. You cannot separate your speaking to others from your speaking to God.

How can we use our tongues to talk with God and then slander and malign? How can we praise God from the same lips that we use to lie and flatter? How can we confess our sins with our lips only to gossip about and exaggerate the sins of others? Do you see the connection?

If we are going to pray with power, we must be diligent to clean up our speech. We

must seek to deal with the sins of speech along with developing righteous speech. We cannot expect to have power and effectiveness in prayer if we are not guarding and purifying our speech.

In this article, I want us to examine how to clean up your speech and develop righteous speech. We will look first at some biblical motivations for this. Then you will be provided with Scripture prayers to help you pray for this in your personal life. Finally, we will close with some practical pointers on how to pursue pure speech that honors God.

### Biblical Motivations For Godly Speech

Why should you strive for godly speech? The Bible offers a variety of reasons for this. *First, God is holy.* God is absolutely pure. He is completely free from even the taint of sin. There is no imperfection in Him, including His Word. If you are going to approach Him, you must have clean lips, "LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart" (**Psalm 15:1-2**). God desires that your speech be characterized by truth and purity. There can be no compromise in this area. To approach this holy God in prayer means to clean up your speech and strive for truthfulness and purity in this area. It is the

Dr. Kevin Meador, 595 Stratton Road, Decatur, MS 39327 (601) 635-2180

Email: [prayercloset\\_1998@yahoo.com](mailto:prayercloset_1998@yahoo.com)

OUR WEB PAGES: [www.prayerclosetministries.org](http://www.prayerclosetministries.org) - [www.kingdompraying.com](http://www.kingdompraying.com)

height of hypocrisy to use the same tongue that you lie, gossip, and flatter with to speak to the holy God.

*Second, ungodly speech grieves the Holy Spirit.* The Word of God declares, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (**Ephesians 4:30**). Sin grieves the Holy Spirit. But if you will look at the context of **Ephesians 4:30**, you will notice that sins of speech are particularly connected to grieving the Spirit (**Ephesians 4:29, 31**). When the Holy Spirit is grieved, He does not release His power into your life. He ceases to work in powerful and unique ways in your life. This is will be a major hindrance to your praying since it is only through Him that you are able to pray (**Galatians 4:6, Ephesians 2:18**). You should strive for purity of speech so that the Spirit will not be grieved and your prayers hindered.

*Next, ungodly speech is a symptom of a deeper problem.* Listen to the words of Jesus, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, and blasphemies" (**Matthew 15:18-19**). Jesus is teaching that ungodly words come from spiritually unhealthy hearts. When a person uses ungodly speech, it is a symptom of a deeper heart problem. God's will is for you to have a "clean heart" (**Psalms 51:10**). It is only through confession, repentance, and spiritual growth that this can happen. You must practice these things so that your heart will be changed and you will speak what is right, holy, and true.

*Ungodly speech should not characterize the child of God's life.* It is not fitting that a child of God should speak as the lost do. The Word of God says, "Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so" (**James 3:10**). A child of God should not use his speech for ungodly purposes. This is not why God saved him. God desires that the believer's speech glorify Him and build up others.

*Finally, sins of speech are easily committed.* The majority of sins that we commit are sins of speech. The Word of God says, "In the multitude of words sin is not

lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise" (**Proverbs 10:19**). Unless we are diligent to guard what we say, sinful speech will flow from our lips. Unfortunately, people do not view sins of speech in the same way that they do others. They do not feel that they are as "sinful" as perhaps other types of sin. Sins of speech are more "socially acceptable" than others. When you combine this attitude with the ease of committing sins of speech, you have an atmosphere where one can become tolerant of the evil use of speech. God hates all sin, including the sinful words that we speak. We cannot allow ourselves to become tolerant in this matter.

### Scripture Prayers For Godly Speech

The following are Scripture prayers that you can pray for godly speech. You can use these to plead for a "spiritual mouth washing." These prayers are based on the Word of God. Because of this, you can plead these with confidence and expectation (**1 John 5:14-15**). You can use these for yourself or pray them for others who are struggling in this area.

Father, I pray in the name of Jesus that You would enable me to restrain my speech. Grant me the wisdom to know when to speak and what to say in the various situations of my life. Deliver me from speaking multitudes of words carelessly (**Proverbs 10:19**).

Father, Your Word declares that You hate lying lips. I ask in the name of Jesus that You would create in me Your hatred of lying. I pray that I would hate lying with all my being. Set me free from lying lips. I plead that You would empower me to speak the truth and not compromise with lying in any form (**Proverbs 6:17**).

Father, Your Word says that whoever spreads slander is a fool. Deliver me from the foolishness of loving and spreading slander. I ask that I would hate slander in any form. I plead that I would not compromise with this by

listening to or spreading slander (**Proverbs 10:18**).

Father, I pray that I would speak wisdom. When I open my mouth, I ask that I would say what is right and true. Teach me to say what is acceptable in various situations that I face on a daily basis (**Proverbs 10:31-32**).

Father, I plead that You would enable me to guard my speech. Equip me with the wisdom and power to control what I say. Deliver me from opening my mouth without considering what I am going to say (**Proverbs 13:3**).

Father, Your Word says that a soft answer turns away wrath. I ask in the name of Jesus that You would strengthen me to give a soft answer to those who agitate and anger me. I pray that I will speak in a kind and compassionate way to anyone who provokes me. Deliver me from the harsh words that will only stir up more anger in all who are involved (**Proverbs 15:1**).

Father, I pray that You will empower me to speak the right words at the right time. I ask that my speech would bless, challenge, convict, encourage, and help others. I plead that others would have joy in what I say. Grant me the wisdom and power to minister to others by what I say (**Proverbs 15:23**).

Father, I plead that I would speak the truth in love to others. Teach me how to provide the gracious and gentle rebuke to those who need it. Deliver me from the sin of flattery. I pray that I will not tell people what they want to hear. Give me the strength and wisdom to tell the truth even when it is painful or difficult (**Proverbs 28:23; Ephesians 4:15**).

Father, I ask in the name of Jesus that no evil speech will proceed out of my mouth. I pray that I would not use foul or abusive language. I plead that everything I say will be good and helpful so that my words will be an encouragement to those who hear them (**Ephesians 4:29**).

Father, I pray that my speech will be filled with grace, seasoned with salt, so that I may be able to answer unbelievers concerning my beliefs and my lifestyle (**Colossians 4:6**).

Father, I plead in the name of Jesus that You would enable me to bridle my tongue. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, I ask that I would exercise self-control over my speech. Father, I struggle with (a sin or sins of speech). Help me to conquer this sin (or these sins). Only You can help me overcome (**James 1:26**).

Father, grant me the spiritual maturity to control my speech and to use it for Your glory and the good of others. I ask that I will grow into the spiritually mature person that guards his/her speech and speaks what is holy and right (**James 3:2**).

Father, I ask You to create a clean heart within me. Renew a right spirit in me. Do these things so that I might speak those things that please You and encourage others (**Psalms 51:10**).

## Practical Applications

The following are some practical pointers for growing in your ability to overcome sinful speech and to cultivate godly speech.

- ✓ *Guard your heart.* Be diligent to guard your heart from what you listen to and watch. If you listen to sinful speech, it will flow from you at some point. What goes in must come out. If you allow it to enter your heart, you will be speaking the same thing at some point (**Matthew 15:18-19**).
- ✓ *Develop the discipline of thinking before speaking.* This is a holy habit that needs to be cultivated in the life of every believer. Pray for the Holy Spirit to grant you the self-control to do this.
- ✓ *Deal immediately and harshly with any temptation to sinful speech.* When the thought enters your mind to say something that is sinful, deal with it

immediately and harshly. Do not toy with it or entertain it.

- ✓ *Learn the lesson of silence.* There are times when it is best not to say anything. It is okay if you don't always have something to say. It is better to be silent than to speak without thinking about what you're going to say.
- ✓ *Use prayer instead of slander.* When you hear slander or gossip, pray about the people involved. Instead of receiving it and passing it on, let it drive you to intercede for those involved. One of the ways that I have dealt with slander and gossip is by prayer. It helps me deal with it individually. And it has enabled me to help others. When someone begins to share gossip or slander, I will say to that person, "Why don't we stop right now and pray for the person or the people involved?" This has shown that I'm not willing to listen to slander and gossip and that we must pray instead of using slander and gossip.
- ✓ *Keep your distance from people that use sinful speech.* If at all possible, put distance between yourself and someone who is characterized by lying, gossip, slander, or any other sins of speech. This will help you to avoid having your mind and heart filled with these things. It will also protect you. Anyone who will gossip or slander others to you will do the same with others concerning you.
- ✓ *Memorize and meditate on the Word of God.* As you fill your mind and heart with the truth of God's Word, you will speak what is right, true, and holy. The more you fill your heart and mind with truth, the more you will speak truth and avoid the lies.

## Standing Against Satan's Schemes For The Schools

The Bible tells us in **2 Corinthians 2:11** that Satan has schemes and plans that he has devised to accomplish his evil purposes. He longs to inflict harm, ruin, and destruction on

people and institutions. One of his main targets is the schools of our nation. He knows that if he can entrap and capture the hearts and minds of young people, he can influence and ruin the nation and future generations.

The only hope for our schools and the young people is intercessory prayer. We must plead with God for the destruction of Satan's schemes and plans against the schools and the kids. The following prayer guide is provided to help you stand against these schemes.

Father, Your Word declares that Satan is a liar. He is attempting to fill the minds of the students at \_\_\_\_\_ with those lies. I pray that the students at \_\_\_\_\_ will reject those lies and will believe the truth (**John 8:44**).

Father, Your Word says that Satan is a murderer. He will attempt to produce hatred and strife among the students at \_\_\_\_\_. He will strive to create a spirit of violence among the students. I pray that the students at \_\_\_\_\_ will forsake hatred, prejudice, and violence. Create a spirit of love and compassion in the students at \_\_\_\_\_ (**John 8:44**).

Father, Your Word states that Satan has conquered the lives of people; they live under his power. This is true of students at \_\_\_\_\_. I ask that the Lord Jesus Christ would set them free from his control. Deliver them from his evil grip through Jesus (**Acts 10:38**).

Father, Your Word reveals that Satan afflicts people with suffering and illness. I pray that You would grant healing and restoration to the students at \_\_\_\_\_. I pray that You would set the students at \_\_\_\_\_ free from any bondage that Satan has inflicted on their lives (**Luke 13:16**).

Father, Your Word teaches that Satan is an accuser. He longs to produce guilt and shame in the lives of the students at \_\_\_\_\_. I ask that they would turn to Jesus and receive